



Patent Office
Canberra

I, GAYE TURNER, TEAM LEADER EXAMINATION SUPPORT AND SALES hereby certify that annexed is a true copy of the Complete specification in connection with Application No. 72461/00 for a Petty Patent by AINSWORTH GAME TECHNOLOGY PTY LTD filed on 21 December 2000.

I further certify that pursuant to the provisions of Section 37 of the Patents Act 1990 Application No. 72461/00 was treated as a provisional application and reallocated no. PR 3074.

I further certify that the name of the applicant has been amended to AINSWORTH GAME TECHNOLOGY LIMITED pursuant to the provisions of Section 104 of the Patents Act 1990.

WITNESS my hand this
Twenty-seventh day of November 2001

GAYE TURNER
TEAM LEADER EXAMINATION
SUPPORT AND SALES

- 1 -

AUSTRALIA

PATENTS ACT 1990

SECTION 37

I DIRECT THAT THIS APPLICATION IS TO
TAKEN TO BE, AND TO HAVE ALWAYS BEEN,
A PROVISIONAL APPLICATION.

Lisa Treverso 15.2.01
DELEGATE OF THE COMMISSIONER DATE

COMPLETE SPECIFICATION

FOR A PETTY PATENT

ORIGINAL

Name of Applicant:

AINSWORTH GAME TECHNOLOGY ^{Limited} ~~PTY LTD~~



Actual Inventor:

Jason Meyer

Address of Service:

BALDWIN SHELSTON WATERS
60 MARGARET STREET
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Invention Title:

GAMING MACHINE

The following statement is a full description of this invention, including the best method of performing it known to me/us:-

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to gaming machines. The invention has been developed primarily for computerised gaming machines and will be described herein with reference to that application. However, the invention is not limited to that
5 particular field of use and may be suitable for many other applications.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Gaming machines have long been known and are now one of the most common forms of gambling. Usually gaming machines will simulate a well known game of chance. One of the oldest and best known forms of gaming machine is the rotating reel
10 type "poker machine". In light of its popularity the present invention will be described with reference to this type of gaming machine.

Poker machines use a series of three or more reels, each reel having symbols on its peripheral edge. The reels are rotated upon the placement of a wager and then stopped to produce an arrangement of randomly selected symbols. Winnings are paid if the random
15 arrangement of symbols matches one of the predetermined winning combinations.

More recently, these gaming machines have been computerised with a video screen replacing the physically rotating reels. Typically, the display screen presents an array of symbols in five columns and three rows equating to the symbols that would normally be seen on the five physically rotating reels of the old style mechanical machines.
20 Computerised machines have allowed players to bet on symbols appearing in one or more rows or columns instead of just the middle row which was traditionally the only row available for betting on in the old style mechanical machines. Eventually, all the practical "pay lines" of symbols available in the five column, three row array were exhausted. In an ongoing effort to further enhance the gaming experience, "wild cards"

have been introduced into the simulated poker machine game. Wild cards are well known in many card games. They are cards that have been designated as being able to substitute for other symbols and thereby increase a players chances of forming a winning combination. The appearance of a wild card in an array of symbols shown on a
5 computerised gaming machine is even more advantageous because it is usually in more than one of the "pay lines" of the array. Despite this, players are now very familiar with the wild card feature and its appearance in an array of symbols does not provide a strong sense of bonus for many seasoned players.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

10 It is an object of the present invention to overcome or ameliorate at least one of the disadvantages of the prior art, or to provide a useful alternative.

According to a first aspect, the present invention provides a gaming machine adapted to display an array of symbols randomly selected from a set of symbols and paying winnings on the occurrence of predetermined combinations of symbols within the
15 array, wherein;

the set of symbols has one or more wild cards that can substitute for any other symbol in the set in order to form a winning combination, and

at least one of the wild cards is a predetermined wild card such that;

the winnings paid on the occurrence of a winning combination incorporating the
20 predetermined wild card is greater or less than the winnings paid on the corresponding winning combination that has the symbol which was substituted by the predetermined wild card.

Preferably, when more than one of the wild cards appear in the winning combination, the gaming machine is adapted to selectively stipulate whether the

winnings paid will be calculated using only one of the wild cards in the winning combination, all of the wild cards in the winning combination or predetermined combination of the wild cards in the winning combination.

Preferably, the winnings paid on the occurrence of a winning combination which
5 incorporates one of the predetermined wild cards is the amount of winnings payable on the corresponding winning combination that has the symbol for which was substituted by the wild card, multiplied by a factor greater than 1. Of course, it will be appreciated that the gaming machine may use one or more conventional wild cards (i.e. having a multiplying factor of one) in addition to one or more wild cards with multiplying factors
10 of greater or less than one.

In a further preferred form, the wild cards comprise at least two symbols in the set, each wild card having an individual fixed multiplying factor. In other embodiments, each of the wild cards is randomly assigned a multiplying factor upon its occurrence in a winning combination the array such that the, or each of the random multiplying factors is
15 graphically displayed.

In a particularly preferred form, the machine is adapted to ensure that any occurrence of the wild cards in the array has at least two of the wild cards positioned adjacent each other. In these embodiments it would be typical for the set to have three wild cards, each having an individual multiplying factor and each appearing adjacent
20 each other in the array.

In a particularly commercial form, the wild cards are displayed in the array such that they are adjacent each other with each of the individual wild cards clearly occupying a particular site in the array and yet graphically represented so that they appear to be part of a single oversized symbol in the array.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Preferred embodiments will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a schematic representation of the display of the gaming machine
5 according to the present invention; and

Figure 2 is a schematic representation of the display on a gaming machine according to another form of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring to the figures, the gaming machine displays an array of symbols 1
10 arranged in five columns and seven rows. The symbols shown in the array 1 are randomly selected from a predetermined set of symbols which includes several wild cards which can substitute for any of the other symbols in order to form a winning combination of symbols. As is typical in the industry, the gaming machine portrays a particular theme or motif. For the purposes of illustration, the theme may be related to
15 Olympic competition, whereby the three different types of wild card 2, 3 and 4 are depictions of gold, silver and bronze medals.

Throughout the array are a number of predetermined "pay lines". A pay line is a predetermined line through the array that the player can place a bet on. Upon the occurrence of a winning combination in a pay line that is carrying a bet, the machine will
20 pay the predetermined level of winnings. The winnings are calculated from the amount wagered on the pay line and the payout level shown on the score card. The score card is a table displayed somewhere on the gaming machine which sets out the various winning combinations and the associated winnings.

If a wild card 2, 3 or 4 appears in a pay line carrying a bet, the players' chances of a winning hand are improved as the wild card substitutes for any of the other cards in the pack. The wild card feature has been known in the field of electronic gaming machines for some time and many players are familiar with it to the point where its appearance in a pay line no longer gives them a strong sense of bonus. By giving one or more of the wild cards the ability to increase or decrease the winnings payable on the corresponding winning combination that did not have any wild cards, the game designer can provide the player with a greater range of game "volatility".

The volatility of a gaming machine refers to the expected frequency of wins and corresponding amount paid for each win. Over time, all gaming machines return a set percentage of the bets received as winnings. However, a machine with high volatility will return this percentage through fewer wins of high value as opposed to a low volatility machine providing more wins of less value.

By giving the wild cards the ability to influence the winnings paid when they appear in a winning hand they can be used to adjust the volatility of the gaming machine to any desired level. Furthermore, if the wild card greatly increases the winnings paid then its occurrence in a pay line carrying a bet, it is more likely to give the player a strong sense of bonus. By using adjacent sets of wild cards in the array, they can have greater visual appeal and impact. Furthermore, they can significantly increase any winning amounts, especially if all available pay lines are played. This provides a strong incentive for the player to maximise the number of pay lines played which tends to increase the bet level. Hence, the gaming machine owner enjoys higher returns from the machine without increasing the preset percentage of bets that must, over time, get paid in winnings.

In the example shown in Figure 2, the gaming machine uses three different types of wild card. For the purposes of illustration, the wild cards have been placed in reel number 5, however, it will be appreciated that they could appear in any of the other reels 1 to 4 as well. The bronze wild card 4 is a "normal" wild card in that its appearance in a pay line carrying a bet is advantageous in that it can substitute for any other card but it will not alter the amount of winnings paid. On the other hand, the silver 3 and gold 2 will respectively double or treble the winnings normally paid for that particular hand. Obviously, this serves to enhance the feeling of bonus when the silver or gold wild cards appear in a pay line.

10 To further enhance the sense of bonus, the gaming machine can be configured such that the wild cards always appear in the array in groups of two or more and always adjacent one another. Referring to Figure 1, the gaming machine may be programmed such that the wild cards will always appear in groups of at least two. In the array shown in Figure 1, five wild cards have appeared adjacent each other. However, it will be
15 appreciated that the number of adjacent wild cards is arbitrarily and may be on two or more reels. As the wild cards are adjacently positioned, the number of pay lines that will pass through at least one of the wild cards in the group is increased.

Furthermore, as the wild cards are positioned next to each other, they can be graphically displayed as a single oversized substitute symbol while still maintaining
20 graphical representations of the individual wild cards within each of the sites in the array. Each site within the single oversized substitute symbol will have the multiplying factor corresponding to the type of wild card displayed in that site and it will multiply the winnings of any pay line passing through it as usual. However, ensuring that oversized substitute symbols appear instead of the same number of wild card symbols

dispersed over the entire array helps to provide greater visual emphasis to the appearance of the wild cards thereby giving the player a greater sense of bonus.

If two or more wild cards appear in the same pay line, it is a simple matter for the game designer to determine how the winnings will be affected in order to maintain the
5 desired level of volatility.

As shown in Figure 1, the gaming machine can be configured such that the wild cards will always appear in the array in five adjacent sites on a single reel. The display graphics can then be configured to maximise the visual impact that the appearance of the wild cards will have on the player. Furthermore, the set of five wild cards within a
10 single reel will intersect most of the pay lines in the array which tends to favour players that place bets on all of the available pay lines rather than players who tend to bet on just a few of the available pay lines.

The present invention has been described herein by way of example only.
Ordinary workers in this field will readily recognise many variations and modifications
15 which do not depart from the spirit and scope of the broad inventive concept.

THE CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:-

1. A gaming machine adapted to display an array of symbols randomly selected from a set of symbols and paying winnings on the occurrence of predetermined combinations of symbols within the array, wherein;
5 the set of symbols has one or more wild cards that can substitute for any other symbol in the set in order to form a winning combination, and
at least one of the wild cards is a predetermined wild card such that;
the winnings paid on the occurrence of a winning combination incorporating the predetermined wild card is greater or less than the winnings paid on the corresponding
10 winning combination that has the symbol which was substituted by the predetermined wild card.
2. A gaming machine according to claim 1, wherein when more than one of the wild cards appear in the winning combination, the gaming machine is adapted to selectively stipulate whether the winnings paid will be calculated using only one of the wild cards in
15 the winning combination, all of the wild cards in the winning combination or predetermined combination of the wild cards in the winning combination.
3. A gaming machine according to claim 1, wherein the winnings paid on the occurrence of a winning combination which incorporates one of the predetermined wild cards is the winnings paid on the corresponding winning combination that has the
20 symbol which was substituted by the wild card multiplied by a factor greater than 1.
4. A gaming machine according to claim 3, wherein the wild cards comprise at least two symbols in the set, each wild card having an individual fixed multiplying factor.
5. A gaming machine according to claim 3, wherein each of the wild cards is randomly assigned a multiplying factor upon its occurrence in a winning combination

the array such that the, or each of the random multiplying factors is graphically displayed.

6. A gaming machine according to claim 4, wherein the machine is adapted to ensure that any occurrence of the wild cards in the array has at least two of the wild cards positioned adjacent each other.

7. A gaming machine according to claim 6, wherein the set to have three wild cards, each having an individual multiplying factor and each appearing adjacent each other in the array.

8. A gaming machine according to claim 7, wherein the wild cards are displayed in the array such that they are adjacent each other with each of the individual wild cards clearly occupying a particular site in the array and yet graphically represented so that they appear to be part of a single oversized symbol in the array.

9. A gaming machine substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to one or more of the embodiments of the invention as shown in the accompanying drawings.

15 DATED this 21st day of December, 2000 ~~Limited~~
AINSWORTH GAME TECHNOLOGY ~~PTY LTD~~

Attorney: KENNETH W. BOLTON
Registered Patent and Trade Mark Attorney of Australia
of BALDWIN SHELSTON WATERS





ABSTRACT (Figure 1)

A gaming machine that uses wild cards to substitute four symbols within a randomly selected array of symbols such that the appearance of a wild card in any winning combination carrying a bet multiplies the usual winnings by a predetermined multiplying
5 factor associated with the wild card.

Reel 1	Reel 2	Reel 3	Reel 4	Reel 5
...	King
...	Bronze Wildcard (x1) ~ 4
...	...			Silver Wildcard (x2) ~ 3
				Gold Wildcard (x3) ~ 2
				Silver Wildcard (x2) ~ 3
				Bronze Wildcard (x1) ~ 4
				Jack



Figure 1

Reel 1	Reel 2	Reel 3	Reel 4	Reel 5	
...	Bronze Wildcard (x1)	~ 4
...	King	
...	...			Gold Wildcard (x3)	~ 2
				Ace	
				Ten	
				Nine	
				Silver Wildcard (x2)	~ 3

Figure 2

1.5